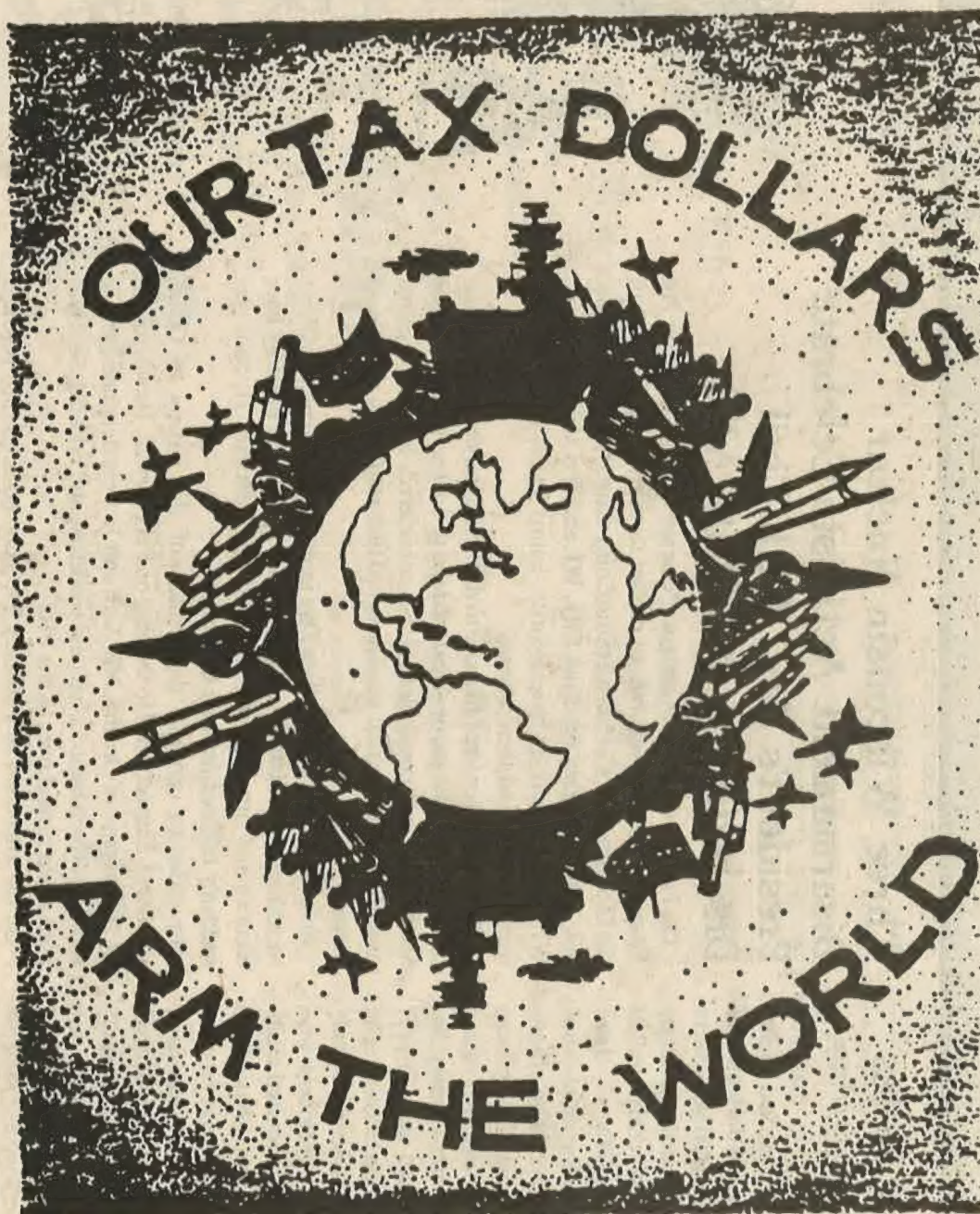


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Newsletter of the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community

Volume 19, Number 1

Spring 1995



Spying on America's Nuclear Secrets: The Message of Mordechai Vanunu

by Sam Day

In Israel's high security prison at Askelon on the wind-swept Mediterranean coast a concrete cubicle holds an inmate, convicted of espionage and treason, who has written a poem called, "I Am Your Spy."

The poem tells why he risked his liberty to bring his country the facts about their government's clandestine development of nuclear weapons at an underground factory where he worked as a technician for nine years:

"I'm on your mission. I'm doing my duty."

"Take it from me."

In the poem he calls on Israelis to join him in taking responsibility for disassembling the machinery of death:

"Come see for yourselves."

"Lighten my burden. Stop the train."

Now, in his ninth year of an 18-year prison term, Mordechai Vanunu, 40, is the subject of an international campaign to free him and vindicate him as a nuclear whistle blower.

Vanunu is rightly honored for the loftiness of his principles. He gave his story to a British newspaper without pay or promise of reward. He refuses to bargain with his captors for relief from years of unbroken solitary confinement.

His case is often thought of as unique to Israel because it raises questions of secrecy and governmental accountability in

a society rooted in democracy and the rule of law. In no other country, let alone a relatively open one, is the very existence of a massive nuclear arsenal an official secret.

Yet for others outside Israel the lesson of Vanunu is not just his courage or his suffering or the special applicability of his case to Israel or even the uniqueness of his status as a hostage to nuclear secrecy. The lesson is that in challenging the nuclear secrecy in his own country he challenges us all.

The secrecy that protects the nuclear weapons enterprise in Israel differs only in form and degree from its counterpart in the United States and other powers, where the existence of such programs is a matter of public record. The common denominator is a denial mechanism which insulates the public from full awareness.

In Israel, where a single atomic weapon could lay waste to most of the country, a natural human reluctance to contemplate nuclear Armageddon is bolstered by draconian censorship laws equating speech and discussion with espionage and treason. In the United States, where such laws have mostly been repealed, the mechanisms that protect and perpetuate our far larger nuclear enterprise are more subtle.

The psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton has written of a "psychic numbing" which enables people to produce weapons of mass destruction even with the knowledge that their use would be suicidal. By separating our

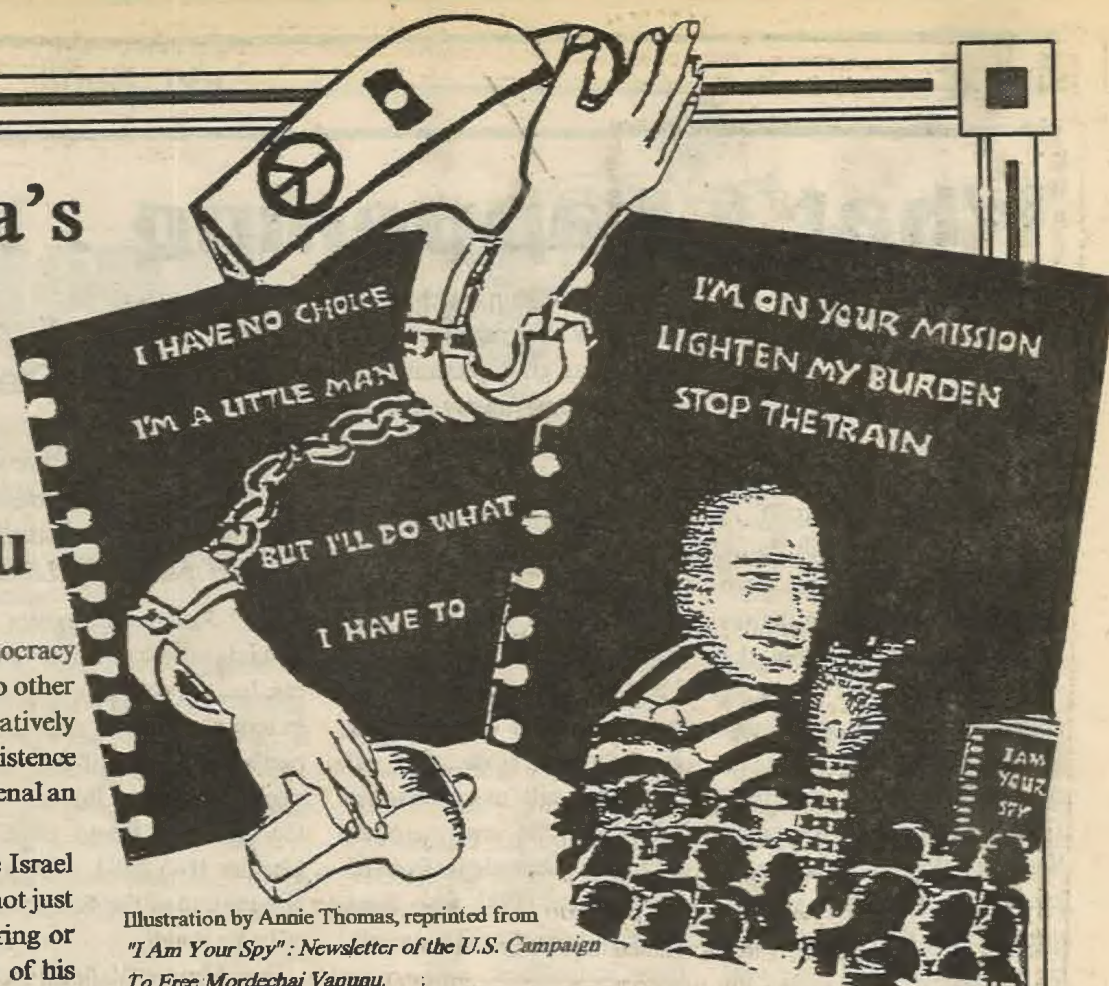


Illustration by Annie Thomas, reprinted from "I Am Your Spy": Newsletter of the U.S. Campaign To Free Mordechai Vanunu.

actions from their likely consequences, the numbing enables us to lead normal lives on the brink of the nuclear abyss.

Psychic numbing is a form of self-censorship and self-immobilization that needs no special help from government. Except for brief interludes when scientists or physicians or religious prophets have managed to put the public in emotional touch with the reality of the nuclear threat, the numbness has held the nation in its grip since the dawn of the atomic age. The mountains of data available on every aspect of the nation's march toward nuclear oblivion — the warheads and their yields, the launchers and their ranges, the targeting doctrines and the retaliatory strategies they engender — can do nothing to loosen the numbing grip.

Given that reality, what would Vanunu do?

I think that, were he American, he would select an American equivalent of the Dimona nuclear weapons production plant, near his home at Beer-sheba, where he made his living, as the target of his nuclear truth telling. An appropriate facility might be the headquarters of the United States Strategic Command (StratCom) at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, NE — not for what it makes or hides but because it symbolizes and embodies the essence of today's nuclear threat to America and the world.

StratCom's purpose is no secret. It controls the targeting and launching of all U.S. long range nuclear weapons from bombers, missile silos and submarines. The details of what StratCom does, and how it does it, fill the shelves of

military and congressional libraries and the pages of popular magazines.

What's secret about StratCom, as with other contours of the nuclear weapons enterprise, is its impact on our lives. Without an ingredient binding StratCom to our lives and our lives to the consequences of nuclear war, the bare facts might as well remain secret.

Fifteen years ago, during the height of the cold war, when StratCom's predecessors, the Strategic Air Command, stood on hair-trigger nuclear alert, a disaffected Air Force Officer named Ronald Coleman sought to supply the missing ingredient.

Captain Coleman, a mathematician and computer programmer, had risen to command of a nuclear missile battery and had gone on to a high position on the nuclear targeting staff at Offutt Air Force Base. But by 1980 his Bible studies had persuaded him that he could no longer, in good conscience, continue the work. So, he resigned from the Air Force and joined anti-war pickets at the base gate.

In press interviews, Coleman told of the gallows humor with which he and others in the targeting staff would mask their misgivings about blowing up the world. One of their jokes mocked the motto of the Strategic Air Command: "Peace is our profession; mass murder is our specialty."

continued on page 6



Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu

Sam Day has been coordinating the U.S. Campaign to Free Vanunu. This campaign, a non-profit organization, also has affiliates in England, Israel, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

While Sam is in jail the campaign is being coordinated by Felice and Jack Cohen-Joppa of *The Nuclear Resister*.

For more info contact:
U.S. Campaign to Free
Mordechai Vanunu
2206 Fox Avenue
Madison, WI 53711

STORY ON
SAM DAY'S
PRESIDENT'S DAY
ACTION AT
STRATCOM
SEE PAGE 7

What's Happening . . . with Carla

by Carla Dawson

I hope this article finds all our readers doing fine. I'm doing very well and my boys are great. I would like to personally thank some people who have been very helpful to me. Big thanks to Marie and Barry for all the school supplies and words of encouragement for my return to school. I would also like to thank Marie for the great time I had at the African American Women's Prayer Meeting. I learned a lot and am so grateful that you asked me to be your guest. God bless you and I'm praying that your eyes will be O.K.

I also want to thank Helen Tichy and Helen Oster for always having a kind word to say to me. You two ladies help me realize what a productive life I can look forward to with God, and friends like you, in my life.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Jean and Bill Bassinger for coming and

giving of their time with us. My boys now have people they can look to as grandparents. Josh and Jordan always ask me when are "those people" going to come back. They really liked the time and attention that you showed them. Julius liked Bill's hair, he said, "That hair is bad." Which means that is very cool hair. I want you to know that you have a special place in our hearts. God bless you, Bassingers. Hope you will come stay with us again soon.

I also send out a quick thanks to the students from St. Mark's and ISU who have come to help us and especially the Grinnellians, who come every two weeks. And, a special thanks goes to the people at Blooming Prairie Farms for their generosity and consideration. There are many other people we would like to thank and just because I didn't mention your name doesn't mean we don't love and appreciate everything that you do for us. Just know that you are always in our hearts, minds and prayers.

Death Penalty Statement

In Iowa, right now, there is an ugly debate over the death penalty. Hopefully, by the time this reaches your home the legislature will have had a profound Christian conversion and unanimously defeated the bill to reinstate the death penalty. Carla has been attending Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting for a long time now and she brought home their statement on the death penalty. We thought it was so good that it should be shared with everyone.

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, has a long history of work in issues of justice, and in particular abolition of the death penalty. John Bellers and George Fox wrote to King Charles II in 1684, urging the elimination of the death penalty in England.

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting finds itself once again confronting the issue of reinstatement of the death penalty in 1995. Members of our community were active in its abolition in 1965.

Jesus was once asked for his support of the death penalty. His reply: "Let one who is without sin cast the first stone."

The death penalty has no place in our vision of a peaceful world. As Quakers, we uphold the sacredness of every life. Nothing that any person can do or say diminishes or destroys this. The death penalty derives its public legitimacy from an opposite assumption, that people forfeit their own humanity when they take a life.

We recognize the anger at crime and the fear of becoming

victims that feeds this belief. However, reconciliation can never come from vengeance disguised as justice. We believe that the taking of a life is beyond the authority of any human being, including officials of the state. The death penalty magnifies the tragedy of a lost life by killing again, ignoring the human capacity for change, quenching forever the possibility of redemption and renewed contribution.

In addition to our moral and spiritual opposition to the death penalty, we oppose it capricious and biased application. Driven by retribution, shaped by the inherent structural inequities of the criminal justice system, the death penalty cannot be applied equitably and without error. Because of these inescapable deficiencies, which reflect historical biases in our society, the sentence of death is applied disproportionately to minority and poor defendants. There are documented cases of innocent people being executed in this century. Given the fallibility of human action and decision, the

government should not be given the power to take the kind of chance with the lives of people under its care.

Finally, The state should not commit the very act which it condemns. Legal murder does not teach that killing is wrong. Rather, every execution sends out a message of profound pessimism about the value of human life. Every premeditated, "legal", death numbs society further to the realities of hatred and violence, a numbness that fosters passive acceptance and distracts from the active pursuit of effective solutions.

It is time to abandon the death penalty as a failed policy. We look, as in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "beyond a negative peace, which is the absence of tension, to positive peace which is the presence of justice." In our steadfast commitment to aid the creation of a community where tension and mistrust are replaced with ease and celebration, we oppose the unfairness of the death penalty and the brutality of its symbolism.

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(515) 246-9887

Lazarus House 1317 - 8th St.
(515) 246-1499

Community Members

Ed Bloomer, Carla Dawson and sons: Julius, Joshua, and Jordan, Joanne Kennedy, Norman Searah

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Associate Editor - Michael Sprong

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Circulation - Frank Cordaro



Friday Night Liturgy at the Catholic Worker

*All liturgies are at 7:30 p.m. and are held at Dingman House, 1310 7th St. Everyone is welcome!

Mar. 17	with Fr. Don Bruck
Mar. 24	with Fr. Kevin Cameron
Mar. 31	with Fr. Tom Coenen
Apr. 7	with Fr. Mike Amadeo
Apr. 14	No Liturgy - Good Friday
Apr. 21	with Fr. Chris Harshorn
Apr. 28	with Fr. Richard Tomasek
May. 5	with Fr. Dave Fleming
May. 12	with Fr. Dave Polich
May. 19	with Fr. Kevin Cameron
May. 26	with Fr. Tom Coenen
June 2	No Liturgy Rafael Masabakhwa's ordination
June 9	with Fr. Frank Cordaro



Community News



by Richard Ngamo

It's hard to believe that I have been living at the Catholic Worker House for a year. Time has been flying so fast and lots of things have been going on. The community is waiting for the release of Fr. Frank. Frank is in jail because of his beliefs on the peace issue. I miss him and ask you to join me in prayer for him so that a day will come when worldwide peace is established. Peace for all, peace with all, and peace in all. Max Schure, a friend-neighbor-brother-volunteer, is probably in Africa. I haven't heard from him, but he did tell me before Christmas that he was planning to go to Africa. I pray for him so that the Lord will watch over him because lots of African countries are having social conflicts, and political strikes. Brett Murner, brother-volunteer, who lived

with me at Ligutti house, is now back with his family and getting ready to open a new page of his life. Beside *Sleepless Dreams*, a book he edited to close his contribution to the Justice Movement in Des Moines, he did lots of repair work and significantly improved things in the community. I enjoyed sometimes helping him and having fun together.

A new person has joined the Community and is a great gift for us. Her name is Joanne. She has been travelling quite a bit, spending three weeks in California in January. Norman had been working very hard despite his health. He sometimes asks me questions about my country. That makes me feel good to discover his sense of analysis, belief, open-minded curiosity and humility. Carla is in her second semester at DMACC. In addition to her being a mother, a student, and a Catholic Worker, she

works at Moulton School. She is doing very well and reports that Julius is on the honor roll again, with a 3.0 grade point average. He is also on a basketball team and they are doing pretty good. Joshua is learning a lot in kindergarten. He says his favorite activity is free drawing. Jordan is also doing a good job. He goes to Pre-kindergarten in the morning and Headstart in the afternoon, since he does not need a nap. He is learning to write his name. Eddie is the house man.

Lazarus's House has been shut down for rehabilitation. The community wants to improve its hospitality. Lazarus house needs lots of repairs in order to continue hosting those without shelter. The community is asking people to "adopt a room" and get this project done. We will appreciate any kind of help

that you might offer.

I am in my third semester at DMACC studying general education. The Catholic Worker House has been the ideal answer to my situation. If the Community hadn't provided me hospitality, I couldn't have made it this far. I want to say thank you to all who support this Community, and I want to thank Tom Cornel and Kenny Gould for sharing my situation in their New York paper. I hope a day will come when we can look back at these scary times and feel good together. I want to keep the smile not only on my face, but also in my heart.

It is very scary time for me. I want to be a pharmacist. The Drake University pharmacy curriculum, requires 159 semester credit hours. At the end of this semester I will have earned a total of 102 hours from Yaoundé University, Cameroon and DMACC.

There are no more classes I can take at DMACC which will be transferable toward a pharmacy degree.

Unfortunately, I have a \$4,450 debt to Drake University and cannot be readmitted without clearing this debt. This is where I need your help. As an international student I have to be enrolled in twelve semester hours during the Fall and Spring semesters to satisfy immigration requirements. Please, help me to stay in this country and stay in school. I will appreciate any kind of help you might have to offer. Donations and suggestions can be mailed to Richard Ngamo-Box 373-Des Moines, IA 50306. I especially want to thank Erik, 11 years old, and Evan, 5 years old, who gave me their savings for my tuition. I remain a long way from the end of this journey, but hope that together we shall overcome.



At the Catholic Worker, Dreaming of My Children

I am here serving the poor with hospitality:

In their faces, broken light and cordiality.

Across open spaces, eucharistic faces swim into sight:

The river flows through shadows blessing the night.

Frank Pommersheim
February 1994

Frank Pommersheim is a professor of law at the University of South Dakota and a long time supporter of the Catholic Worker. In February of 1994 he spent several weeks at the Des Moines Catholic Worker providing help and hospitality. He currently lives in Vermillion, SD and a collection of his poetry and prose, *Snaps*, is available from Rose Hill Books, 28291 - 444th Avenue, Marion, SD 57043.

Norman's Whereabouts

by Norman Scarah

Tomorrow is coming and I'm asking myself are we ready for it? Will it be a Star Trek type world or a world where material goods are less important? I find that Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi and Gandhi chose to limit the amount of personal things they had and shared with others willingly. I don't see us as going into a future that is full of love and peace.

When I was a teenager I used to look around at the things that the world had given me so that I may someday pass it on; the freshness of the water (even

if you got it from the sink); fresh air (no matter where you went); walking down the street and saying "hello" to your neighbor. A lot has changed since then. The violence in society keeps growing, people are unhappy, children are carrying guns and people are afraid of their neighbors. Just the other day I read that police officers are so unhappy that some of them are committing suicide.

I think the only thing we can do to make our future better is to welcome Jesus into our lives along with others who's teachings are similar. We must not be greedy, which we all have a habit of being, and we should share with everyone and help

everyone.

Right now, I am grateful for the opportunity to use Frank's car to go and visit my family later this month. I will be travelling around New England for about three weeks. I will get to visit some of my brothers and sisters who I've been promising to visit for a long time. Until I leave I'll be busy working on the basements in the houses and doing various projects around Lazarus House. After all, I live there now, just like I did when I first moved here fifteen years ago. It's good to be back in that house. Thank you to all who have supported me.



Book Review: In the Midst of His People

by Frank Cordaro

Fr. Frank wrote this review from Yankton Federal Prison Camp where he is serving a six-month sentence for nonviolent direct action at Offutt AFB in resistance to StratCom. He began serving his sentence on October 20 and is expected to be released on April 18.

I'd been anxious to read Sisters Mira Mosle and Shirley Crisler's biography of Bishop Maurice Dingman, entitled *In the Midst of His People* ever since I first heard about the project. We had advertised the book in *vp* even before it was available. I finally got to read my copy of the book here in the Federal Prison Camp at Yankton, and I was not disappointed.

Mira and Shirley did a great job giving us an overview of the life and times of Bishop Dingman. They captured the true essence and spirit of the man, the priest and the bishop, recounting the significant contributions he made to his beloved community. Contributions that reached well beyond the denominational and geographical boundaries that set this Diocese of Southwest Iowa apart.

Given the current climate in the world today, especially in the Catholic Church, perhaps this book can be an important model, as testimony of what one man in a very small, Midwestern diocese can do, equipped simply with the documents and spirit of the Second Vatican Council and a deep, abiding faith in the people he served. What follows is the first of a three part series on Bishop Dingman. The first, here, is a review of the book, the next two parts will be a condensed biography and some reflections on events that were not addressed in the book for lack of space, no doubt.

The book begins with a recounting of the Papal visit to Des Moines on October 4, 1979. It is a delightful story, wonderfully told by the authors, emphasizing the significance the visit had for Bishop Dingman. Ray Lucker is quoted, saying "I never will forget the great, radiant happiness he showed during the visit of the Holy Father to Des Moines. I believe he looked upon the preparation for that visit, its celebration and the afterglow as the high points of his life."

The next chapters cover the

lesser known events in Bishop Dingman's life, including his important, formative years on the family farm in St. Paul, IA. For those of us who came to know and love him at the height of his career, the book sheds light on the forces that formed Bishop Dingman into the man he was before he ever came to Des Moines. The influences of a small, rural, German American community shaped his basic value system and world view. Mosle and Crisler take us all the way through his high school and college years at St. Ambrose in Davenport, IA, to his years in Rome for major seminary.

I found the excerpts from Bishop Dingman's letters to his mother, during those years in Rome, to be most interesting. They were filled with insights about the rise of Hitler and Mussolini. It is during this time that he gained a global perspective of both the world and the Church.

He began to develop the principle of "balanced tension", measuring the new insights he'd received in Rome with those he'd developed while growing up in Iowa. He concluded that the most creative solutions to complex problems are often found while holding differing points of view in tension, but resisting the temptation to negate one or the other. This was the basis of the consensus form of decision making that served him so well in Des Moines.

The book follows Bishop Dingman back to Iowa and his assignment in Davenport, where he was given a wide range of tasks and assignments to perform, often contemporaneously. It required great ingenuity and perseverance for him to be successful, but he managed to excel in all his efforts. This versatility was a useful tool for his later role as bishop.

The final chapter addresses the eighteen years of Bishop Dingman's life including his years in Des Moines. Considering how enormous the task of condensing those active and volatile times must have been, the authors do a remarkable job of broadly covering all of the major events and influences of the last years of his life. There is a recognition that Bishop Dingman's success was due, in part, to his leadership style, referring to him as a compassionate, gentle, open and courageous man, who would listen carefully to people's



Bishop Dingman presiding for a liturgy at the Catholic Worker in 1982.

In the Midst of His People

*The authorized biography
of Bishop Maurice J. Dingman*

by Shirley Crisler, SFCC, and Mira Mosle BVM

Foreword by Senator Tom Harkin

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concerns and dialogue with them.

I believe that this is a very important book about a very important man of the church. We all should hold dear the life

and times of Bishop Maurice Dingman, as hope of what can happen when a person is dedicated to the people they serve and does so with love and courage.

The Seamless Garment of Life

The stance of people of faith toward issues of human life and dignity should truly be a seamless garment from conception to natural death. Any act of violence tears at

that garment and violates us as children of God, whether that act be an abortion or an execution, domestic abuse or gang war, bigotry or nuclear destruction. No excuse for hatred or aggression can cancel the fact that the individual or group we deal with is worthy of respect and life. Despite some failings, our Catholic bishops have done

as good a job as any group, of bringing the light of the Gospel to contemporary society and its violence. Both their attempt to be consistent and to call us to deal with these issues should be noted and acted on.

Defusing a violent society means more than condemning the final act. It demands dealing with causes and conflicts before they become tragic. If we are not part of the solution, then we are part of the problem. "Love has no room for fear. Rather, perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)

Taken from a letter by
Dave Polich,
Des Moines, IA



WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, the arms race, the death penalty and euthanasia.

We believe these issues are linked under a consistent ethic of life.

We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

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Rochester, NY 14618
716-442-8497

Memorial for Archbishop Romero

Wed. March 15
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
4th & High Streets in Des Moines

Potluck Dinner 6:00pm
Memorial Service 7:00pm



Pastors for Peace Caravan
will be coming through
Des Moines, collecting aid for the poor
in El Salvador.
Featured speaker
David Bedell, MD

For more info contact
Mike McHugh (515) 255-8114

DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER Spring Fundraiser



Saturday May 6th
7:30 p.m.

St. Anthony's School
Indianola and S. Union, Des Moines
Parking is available

Entertainment provided by

Relative Minor

The very talented band from Luck, WI
Music begins at 8:30 p.m.



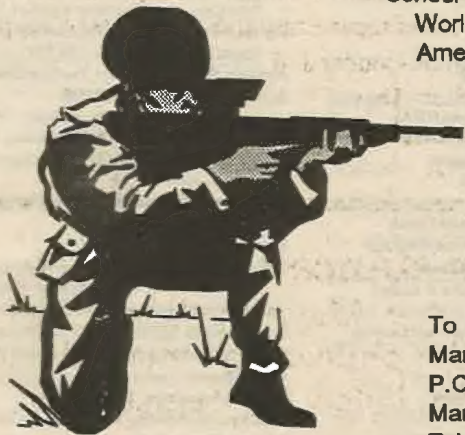
Featuring Brian Terrell and Frank Cordaro.

Tickets are \$6 at the door, \$5 in advance.
For more info contact Joanne at (515) 243-0765.

"School of Assassins"

A 20-Minute Video Documentary

Did you know that U.S. taxpayers foot the bill for a military school on U.S. soil that trains some of the worst human rights violators in the hemisphere?



"School of Assassins," a 20-minute video from Maryknoll World Productions, exposes the U.S. Army School of Americas (S.O.A.), a combat school at Fort Benning, GA, that has trained over 57,000 soldiers from 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The video also features efforts to shut down this school of assassins. It provides an excellent educational resource for peace and justice organizations, Latin America solidarity groups, colleges and high schools.

To order send a total of \$16.95 (includes S&H) to:
Maryknoll World Productions
P.O. Box 308
Maryknoll, NY 10545
Tel: 1-800-227-8523/Fax: 914-945-0670

"Birth Control and World Population: An Alternative Catholic View"

Sr. Maureen Fiedler
Drake University
Olmstead Hall
March 31, 7:00pm

Sr. Fiedler attended the
World Population Conference 1994 in Cairo
and has appeared on Crossfire, 60 Minutes and
The McNeil/Lehrer Report.



Spying on America's Nuclear Secrets

Continued from page 1

Today, with StratCom as part of a strategic nuclear realignment aimed at preserving America's global nuclear reach in the post-cold war world, others are attempting through personal example to de-anesthetize public awareness in much the way Coleman and Vanunu sought to drive the message home.

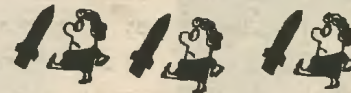
Last October 20, a Catholic priest, Frank Cordaro of Council Bluffs, IA, began a six month federal prison sentence for repeated illegal entries onto the base to protest its nuclear war-fighting role. At his trial he challenged his fellow clergy, noting that far more had crossed the line to eat at the officers club than to question the morality of waging nuclear war.

A few days later another peace activist, Brian Terrell,

mayor of the Iowa farm community of Maloy, began a four month federal prison term for crossing the line at StratCom headquarters.

By such steps, each carrying a measure of personal risk, hundreds of Americans have been attempting to penetrate the secrecy of their government's heedless gamble with the fate of the earth. At military bases, weapons factories and research centers they attempt, with their bodies, to put flesh and blood on a similar message that remains unheard and unheeded.

Their voices, barely audible above the deafening silence of a nuclear armed world, resonate from across the Atlantic with the message of Mordechai Vanunu. They are saying, "I am your spy. Come see for yourselves. Stop the train."



Remembering Fr. Bob Weis



Robert Leo Weis
1930 - 1995

It was with great sadness that I received word of Fr. Bob Weis' tragic death in a car accident in Brazil.

When I was a ninth grader at Dowling High School, Bob was my Latin teacher. I was a terrible Latin student, and after negotiating the lowest possible passing grade — a D- at semester break, I transferred to Spanish.

Fortunately, I was able to work with Bob again during my days at the Catholic Worker. For several years we operated a rural extension of our Catholic Worker community in the vacant rectory of St. Mary's Parish in Rosemount, Iowa, just south of Des Moines. At that time Bob was pastor of St. Mary's along with the parishes in Lacona and Milo. He was a great support for our community in Rosemount as well as in Des Moines.

It was during this time that we discovered Bob's great love for the poor and his keen sense for justice. We also learned of his great desire to serve the poor in a Third World setting.

In 1988 Fr. Bob got his wish. With Bishop Dingman's permission, Bob was accepted as an associate in Maryknoll society and was sent to Brazil to work with the poor.

We kept in contact with Fr. Bob at the Catholic Worker through the years by exchanging newsletters.

Fr. Bob was on the cutting edge of empowerment and justice ministry for the poor in Brazil. At the time of his death, he was working with working with a ministry team in a remote area of Brazil. He was trying to obtain a measure of justice for the people he served in the area of wages and land reform.

His death is a great loss for the people of Brazil and for our diocese. Fr. Bob Weis was certainly one of the shining jewels of our Diocesan history.

— Fr. Frank Cordaro

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Alamos Lab. - 2
Journal, 26 Nov

resistance notes

Nuclear Notes

compiled by John LaForge

Highly classified digital codes that enable the launch of some 580 ICBMs were mishandled aboard a Strategic Command aircraft called "Looking Glass" last December. The land-based rockets contain 2,000 warheads with a combined explosive force 38,000 times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Ninety five percent of them are still kept in war-fighting alert. The secret codes were mistakenly given to crew members who didn't have the required clearances to see them. Some of the large Boeing 747s carry a crew of 114. "The current levels of alert carry an intolerable level of risk for no good reason," said Bruce Blair, a former Air Force missile launch officer. Still, after looking at "75 or 80 years" for reducing the ICBM's alert status, Ashton Carter, the Pentagon's top nuclear strategist, said, "most of them are not technically realizable."

The St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, December 1994

Plutonium-contaminated liquid nuclear bombs wastes, held in steel cans called the "tank farm" at the Hanford Reservation in Washington state, "are subject to internal heat buildup and can generate explosive gases." Put bluntly, these tanks can blow up. "More than 60 of the 177 tanks have leaked," and a recent investigation found that automated radiation leak detectors were not even working in 19 tanks. Senator John Glenn, slamming the barn door after the horse had escaped, said, "If an airline had this sort of miserable service record, you can bet that airline would be grounded." - *The New York Times*, 19 Dec 1994

A 30 gallon drum "marked as plutonium" and carrying "less than an pound" was flown by Federal Express from the Sacramento Army Depot to the Los Alamos National Lab. in New Mexico, in violation of the federal law requiring that plutonium be shipped by truck. Both the Army and the Federal Express broke the law, but any dose of radiation to workers "would have been negligible," said Jim Danneskiold of Los Alamos Lab. - *The Milwaukee Journal*, 26 Nov. 1994

Three Wisconsin Nuclear Disarmament Activists Celebrate President's Day With Civil Disobedience at Offutt AFB

On Feb 20, three peace activists "crossed the line" at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, NE, to protest its role as headquarters of the U.S. Strategic Command (StratCom). Sam Day, 68, Madison, WI; Tom Arbogast, 69, Sauk City, WI; and Jim Miles, 36, Luck, WI were detained by base security, issued letters banning them from the base and then released.

The three had entered the base to distribute leaflets warning base personnel that the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons under StratCom's command "could be considered a crime against humanity under certain treaties signed and ratified by the United States."

Following their release, Sam Day immediately re-entered Offutt to continue distribution of the leaflets. He was arrested by base security and turned over to the FBI. On February 21, Sam was suddenly released from an Omaha jail.

In order to continue distribution of the leaflets to Offutt personnel, Sam returned to the base on February 22. He was joined by Jo Peterson of Omaha, NE. Sam and Jo were detained by base security; Jo was issued a ban and bar letter, and released. Sam was once again turned over to the FBI.

On the afternoon of February 23, Sam was arraigned before a U.S. Magistrate in Federal Court, Omaha, NE. He was charged with three counts of wrongful entry onto Offutt. Sam plead not guilty to the charges and trial has been set for March 9. If found guilty, he could be sentenced to as much as 18 months in prison.

It is unknown at the time of this writing how long Sam will be in jail in Omaha, so please send letters of support to Sam and his wife Kathleen at their home address:

2206 Fox Avenue
Madison, WI 53711

ELF Activists Jailed

The *Nuclear Resister* reports that Bonnie Urfer and Cory Bartholomew, both of Black Earth, WI, are each serving six month sentences for their continued efforts to close down the Navy's Project Elf transmitter in Clam Lake, WI. The two have been held in contempt of court for refusing to pay fines resulting from repeated arrests at the ELF facility. John LaForge has also received a six month sentence for refusing to pay fines, but is not currently in jail. Send letters of support for Cory and Bonnie to:

Bayfield County Jail
117 6th Street
Washburn, WI 54891

Second Annual Midwest War Tax Resistance Conference

This conference will be held in Des Moines on Saturday, May 6th. It will include speakers, workshops, drama, and music related to the philosophy, methods and possible consequences of war tax resistance. See form, below, for registration information.

REGISTRATION FORM for Midwest War Tax Resistance Conference May 6 at Des Moines Valley Friends Meetinghouse, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip code _____
Childcare, as needed. _____ (no./ages of children coming)

Please check items that apply:

- ☐ I/we need lodging (No. in party): _____
☐ I smoke ☐ I/we have allergies (explain): _____
☐ I/we have dietary needs: _____

Transportation needs: _____

Other needs: _____

Thank-you for pre-registering!

I would like to facilitate a workshop on: _____

Please complete this form by April 24, 1995 and mail to: Iowa Peace Network, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312; 515/255-7114. Donations accepted; please make checks payable to: "IPN/MWTRC"



"If your soul is at peace and without remorse, prison can even be a pleasant place for a rest. Fear of prison is a trick invented by the authorities to demoralize good Christians. Many acts of cowardice, in fact, are excused by the fear of ending in prison."

IGNAZIO SILONE
cartoon (depicting Brian Terrell's entrance into prison) by Chuck Trapkus

Brian Terrell Released

After completing a four month sentence at Marion Federal Prison Camp, IL, for his conscientious violation of a ban and bar letter at Offutt AFB, Brian is happy to be back at his home in Maloy, IA, and is grateful for all of the support he and his family received during his incarceration. Brian serves as mayor of Maloy and is a member of the Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Community.

Vincent Scotti Eirene Arrested

On January 3rd Vincent Eirene was arrested at the Los Alamos National Laboratory for refusing to leave the premises of the plutonium processing plant. This is the first of many actions anticipated for 1995 - the year we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Vince remains in Los Alamos County Jail and is preparing for the possibility of a year of incarceration. Send letters of support to:

Los Alamos County Jail
2500 Trinity Drive
Los Alamos, NM 87544



Brian Terrell
sharing reflections about
Resistance and Prison

Thursday, March 30th 7:30 P.M.

Wesley Foundation

at Market & Dubuque Streets, Iowa City

Sponsored by

The Eastern Iowa Peace Alliance and The Association of Campus Ministers.

For more information call

(319) 337-5187

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